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to the

ADVISORY COMMISSION

on the

DEVELOPMENT OF GOVERNMENT

in the

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES



Presented by

THE HONOURABLE A. RUSSELL PATRICK
Minister of Industry and Development
Government of the Province of Alberta

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Edmonton, Alberta,

15 December, 1965.

Mr. A. W. R. CARROTHERS, Chairman,
Advisory Commission on the Development of Government in the Northwest
Territories,
P.O. Box 2502, Station D,
Ottawa 4, Ontario.

Dear Mr. Carrothers:


It is my pleasure to present to you this submission on behalf of the Government and the people of the Province of Alberta.

As requested in your letter of 28 August, 1965, to the Honourable Ernest C. Manning, Premier, we have considered the current stage of political and economic development of the Northwest Territories and in this brief are making certain suggestions.

We believe that if these suggestions are accepted and acted on in the spirit in which they are offered, they can form a foundation for a stage in the evolution of the government of the area.

Yours truly,

A. RUSSELL PATRICK,
Minister of Industry & Development.



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THE ALBERTA GOVERNMENT believes that in the best interest of Canada as a whole, and of those now resident in the area, that the Yukon Territory and the Mackenzie River basin of the Northwest Territories should be incorporated into the western provinces. In arriving at this conclusion we have taken into consideration the normal political and social rights of citizens of the area; the economic resources of the area; patterns of communication and of trade in the area; governmental services needed and available for the area; and the general desirability of having administrators and legislators living within the area for which they are responsible.

CANADA IS A FEDERAL STATE with defined spheres of responsibility as between the central and the provincial governments. It has been accepted commonly that as areas became adequately populated, provincial governments would be created to administer the areas. Thus in the period between 1867 and 1905 the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta were created out of portions of the area purchased from the Hudson's Bay Company in 1868/69. Each has gone through intermediate stages and types of government before achievement of the current form with its prerogatives and responsibilities. In the period from 1867 several changes of boundaries of administrative territories and of even provinces were effected as development and circumstances necessitated. Some specified powers were withheld for longer or shorter periods: control of natural resources were only fully vested in Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1930, for instance. Administrative jurisdiction and power have evolved gradually and continually as experience and conditions warranted.

Throughout the whole process the ultimate objective was to vest in the residents of each administrative region the usual and the full democratic duties, privileges and responsibilities that accrue to residents of other provinces of Canada and as specified in the British North America Act. These duties, privileges and responsibilities include proper and full exercise of the voting franchise; right to elect, or be elected, to a legislature; right (subject to the usual conditions) to have representation on the Executive Council; right, whenever local conditions warrant, to have a voice and part in municipal affairs. The objective has been achieved fully, and exercised fully by residents of the prairie provinces.

Canadians in the Northwest Territories have not yet acquired the full range of rights and responsibilities which are presently taken for granted by citizens of the ten provinces. At the moment northern Canadians are bound to be thinking more of the rights and benefits of full citizenship and less of the added responsibilities and burdens which come with full citizenship.

To the harsh realities of living in a land where settlements are few and scattered and population sparse are added the frustrations consequent on dealing with government officials, at distances even greater, who set policies which local people have small real voice in influencing or approving. Development of a paternalistic attitude is a very human effect of education and personal affluence on government officials living in, or coming from, a vastly different cultural and industrial setting. Any form of paternalism is especially galling to residents well acquainted with the hardships and difficulties, the

I POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RIGHTS OF CITIZENS

resources, the transportation and communication problems, of the region in which they live.

Taking the Northwest Territories as a whole, population is still far below the number required to support a separate, full scale, provincial government. However, the number of persons involved, and the scale and type of economic development now reached, justifies consideration of political and administrative union with, and participation in normal governmental affairs of, neighbouring provinces.

Union with adjacent provinces would have a twofold benefit:

- The residents of the area would participate immediately in the full range of rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Businesses and persons in the provinces would begin to participate more actively in economic development under laws and regulations to which they are already accustomed. Borders tend to inculcate psychological inhibitions and these would be removed or reduced for businessmen.

We can think of no better way to forward the governmental development of the Northwest Territories than to offer to share on an equal footing with the residents of the region, opportunities for full participation in all the ordinary, local, political and governmental processes.

ENOUGH IS KNOWN and has been written about the economic resources of the area to render unnecessary a detailed recital and recapitulation of them.*

The mineral resources of the Canadian Shield have been tapped already at points along the full arc from Schefferville in Quebec, through Sudbury and Steep Rock in Ontario, through Flin Flon and Lynn Lake in Manitoba, through Hudson Bay and Uranium City in Saskatchewan, to Yellowknife, Pine Point and Port Radium in the Northwest Territories. It is only a matter of world demand for minerals, and of time, before many other such place names are added to the list both in the Northwest Territories and in the provinces.

There is every indication that in the Mackenzie River Basin are to be found the same types of minerals (such as oil and gas) as are presently known on and beneath the plains' area of Alberta and Saskatchewan. In the Yukon Territory are the same types of resources as are presently found in British Columbia. The eastern Northwest Territories are bound to carry minerals of the kinds found elsewhere on the Canadian Shield.

Governments of the four western provinces have each developed a large fund of practical experience in offering incentives for exploration for, and in controlling development and product conservation of, mineral resources. These funds of experience and knowledge can be extended and adapted readily to cover and include similar regions of northern Canada.

In recent years agriculture has been recognized as a potential resource of certain parts of the Mackenzie River Basin, particularly

II ECONOMIC RESOURCES

*e.g.—*The Northwest Territories Today: A reference Paper for the Advisory Committee on the Development of Government in the Northwest Territories.*

in the Slave River Lowlands just north of Alberta. Provincial research and administrative experience in the development of this resource is of the first order.

No closely reasoned arguments are needed therefore to demonstrate that balanced and aggressive administration of the resources of the Territories is well within the competence and experience of provincial governments.

THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS into the Mackenzie River Basin of northern Canada have been evolving and progressing rapidly in the past two decades. River traffic, historically, has been most important both for persons and commodities into and out of the area. Bulk freight still moves mostly by barge. The railway into Whitehorse has been of great economic importance to the mining industry of the Yukon Territory. It may be assumed confidently that the Great Slave Lake Railway to Hay River will be of equal or greater significance, especially as it has advanced the point of transfer from rail to water carrier by several hundred miles. Automobile and truck type vehicles have hitherto had a very small role to play in development and exploration of the territories but the building of the roads to resources and the advances in the construction and design of vehicles are rapidly making them of more significance. However, over the past forty years air transportation has gradually claimed and won most of the limelight, especially as regards movement of persons. "Effective occupation" of vast reaches of the Territories is only possible through utilization of air transport both for persons and supplies. Particularly in the past twenty years the speed and volume of such transportation has been accelerating and cumulating.

Communication has also been speeded immeasurably. Modern microwave telecommunication up to Inuvik and through the Yukon on into Alaska will be an accomplished fact before Canada's centenary. Even "ordinary" mail flows in almost on a daily basis.

Alberta is the funnel through which most transportation and communication services flow to northwestern Canada. Alberta highways link the industrial and population heartland of America with the Yukon, the District of Mackenzie, and Alaska. The Mackenzie Highway runs from the end of pavement at Peace River up to Hay River on Great Slave Lake, forming one up-to-date mode of entry to the Northwest Territories. Closely paralleling the highway is the new Great Slave Lake railway, which has made possible movement of bulk commodities much further north, much more speedily. Both the Peace and the Athabasca River systems pass through Alberta before they join to form the Slave and then the Mackenzie River: Fort McMurray, on the Athabasca, has for decades been the railhead from which barges passed on down through the Mackenzie and on to the Arctic.

Edmonton has been long known, justifiably, as the "Gateway to the North" just as Winnipeg has been long known as the "Gateway to the West". Mainly out of Edmonton flew the "bush pilots" who had so much to do with opening the northland to mineral exploration and prospecting.

The Alberta Government Telephones microwave system links the Canadian National Telecommunications Territories' network with the

III

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNI- CATION IN THE MACKENZIE RIVER BASIN

remainder of Canada. Thus the Mackenzie River basin transportation and communication systems are extensions of Alberta networks. They represent in this one relatively heavily populated and relatively economically developed region of the Northwest Territories new patterns and new modes superimposed on the Mackenzie River itself.

More important they work out of, and through, northern Alberta.

MOST IMPORTANT in this context is a review of significant developments of recent years in Alberta itself.

- (a) A Northern Alberta Development Council was established in 1963 to study means of promotion, and to promote, economic, social and cultural development in that part of Alberta north of the 55° parallel of latitude. Already it has had one economic study of northern Alberta prepared and published.* In October, 1965 it co-sponsored, with the Peace River Chamber of Commerce, a conference to point up the resources and likely lines of development in northern Alberta.

The Council is charged with a wide series of programmes, ranging from road and airstrip construction to general industrial development.

In itself it is evidence of a new and aggressive policy looking to accelerated development of the northern half of the province.

- (b) The Mackenzie Highway was built, from Peace River to the northern boundary of the province, to provide for more rapid movement of supplies for the mining industry of the Northwest Territories, and to open northwestern Alberta for agricultural development and for mineral (oil and gas) exploration.
- (c) The Alberta Government Telephones microwave telecommunication system has been extended north of Peace River to the northern Alberta boundary and has made possible linking of a similar system down the Mackenzie Valley with the rest of Canada.
- (d) Development of the Athabasca oil sands has been permitted and encouraged. To make Fort McMurray more readily accessible a road has now been built connecting it with Edmonton.
- (e) The Alberta Government has participated actively in the northern "Roads to Resources" programme.
- (f) Although not an Alberta Government project, the Great Slave Lake Railway has been built through northern Alberta. Already the volume of freight being moved has far exceeded early estimates as to likely tonnage.
- (g) Paralleling the railroad agricultural land has been opened for settlement. Grain elevators are appearing along the right of way.

IV

NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT

*"Economic Report on Alberta's Peace River Country" by R. N. Harvey.

(h) Finally, surveys are completed for an Alberta Government financed railway running north from a point near Hinton. Actual construction will begin in 1966. It is probable that the railway may be extended to form an essential link in a system embracing Vancouver, Prince Rupert and Hay River.

(i) Important recent discoveries have led to greatly accelerated exploration for oil and gas throughout the northern half of the province.

These developments over the past decade have resulted in a decided orientation to the north in the minds and imagination of Albertans. *Little added impetus would be needed to encourage a longer and stronger, even more northward oriented, outlook.*

OVER THE YEARS provincial governments have been forced to develop or provide a wide range of services and controls. These range from statutory constitutional obligations (like provision of education) to comparatively recent, in the long historical sense, Boards and Commissions (like Workmen's Compensation Board, Liquor Control Board, Securities Commission, Public Utilities Board, Board of Industrial Relations, Marketing Boards). Each of these Boards was conceived and developed as a result of pressures of interested groups, or as social pressures became apparent, or as the changing industrial base of the province brought new problems to the forefront. Each evolved, not because Government was anxious to control and direct ever more numerous facets of the business, commercial, industrial structure of the community, or of the private life of individuals, but because problems and situations became evident which made impossible, any longer, adherence to the practice of laissez-faire. Social and industrial evolution dictated the creation of controls: their ubiquity, in many ways, is a measure of the commercial and industrial sophistication of a political unit.

So essential, and practical in their applicability, are many of these provincial services and controls that even relatively underdeveloped regions of the nation require them, even though they cannot possibly be financed by the region. Thus both the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories "borrow", frequently, services and controls of neighbouring provinces. For examples, Whitehorse education is patterned after that of British Columbia, and British Columbia school inspection services carry into Whitehorse; the Alberta Workmen's Compensation Board extends coverage into the Yukon and Northwest Territories; industrial disputes sometimes come under the jurisdiction of, and settlement by labour relations' boards of adjacent provinces; students from the Northwest Territories attend the Technological Institutes of the neighbouring provinces. Efforts to encourage tourism are already effected jointly by branches of the Alberta Government, and the Northwest Territories Tourist Association.

Resort is made to these expedients for excellent reasons.

—First, the particular services are necessary facets of contemporary society.

V GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES

- Secondly, they can not be provided and financed by the administration of the Territories out of their limited resources (both monetary and in terms of trained personnel).
- Thirdly, the taking on of such additional chores or duties adds only a relatively small burden to the administration of governments of adjacent provinces, and in some cases is of indirect or direct economic benefit to all parties.

Various ad hoc or negotiated arrangements for services are concluded between provincial governments and the federal government (on behalf of the Territories) as situations demand. At present such services are "borrowed" on no clear pattern but depending on judgments of federal officials as to provincial legislation and regulations and/or as to qualifications of provincial personnel.

Obviously if the Territories were united with adjacent provinces, residents and businesses would also be able to take advantage of an existing body of legislation, of established regulatory boards, of trained administrative personnel. A full range of advanced government services would become available almost immediately to the citizens and business community. To residents and businesses of the Territories the cost of these would be minimal: the bulk of the increased administrative and service charges would be born by taxpayers of the existing provinces. For one or two generations, at least until economic development of the Territories had advanced much further, the arrangement would be very one sided.

Advantages to the business community generally from such a union would be manifold.

- First, known in advance would be the terms and conditions of business life: they would be same as those already obtaining in the present province(s).
- Second, known regulatory or jurisdictional bodies could be appealed to immediately a situation arises, thus avoiding the long delays consequent on having to deal through distant federal officials.
- Third, established terms and procedures for development of (natural) resources of the area would obtain. Such resources would then be developed on a logical long term, economic, basis.
- Fourth, an incentive would exist for the provincial government to invest in capital developments in the area (roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, etc.). No matter what might be the long term benefits to residents of an existing province of such investment no provincial government could justify making such extra-provincial capital expenditures at the present time. (e.g.—the Alberta Government would be unlikely to expend money to assist in by-passing the rapids on the Slave River below Fort Smith: it might be advantageous so to do if "Alberta" included the whole Mackenzie basin.)

AT PRESENT the branches of government responsible for the administration of the Northwest Territories are in Ottawa. All legislation by the Territories council is subject to the approval of the Government of Canada.

The main offices of all Departments and agencies of government dealing with the Territories are in Ottawa. For practical purposes all authorizations for actions must emanate from those offices; any changes of policy do and must clear through them. The efficiency and effectiveness of administration, however well intentioned, is perforce blunted by sheer distance and sheer lack of contact with, and knowledge of local conditions.

Nothing can be substituted for adequate effective local representation. Nothing can be substituted for local, involved, officials who know from first hand local experience both problems and possible solutions.

Government is inevitably made up of legislators and officials. *The Territories simply are neither populous enough, nor wealthy enough, to support a full scale separate government able to provide the full panoply of services expected, demanded, and necessary under modern social and economic conditions.* Obviously the solution is to have effective legislators and administrators locally based. Under present conditions, at the present stage of economic development, the only possible and practicable method of attaining local government is to unite with contiguous provinces.

Tentatively we would suggest that the present Territories should be adjoined to provinces as follows:

1. Yukon Territory and British Columbia.
2. The Mackenzie River Basin and Alberta.
 - (1) Bounded on west by the present Yukon boundary.
 - (2) Bounded on east
 - (a) by extending the Alberta-Saskatchewan boundary northward along the 110° meridian
or
 - (b) by following roughly the heights of land separating the Mackenzie River and the Hudson's Bay—Arctic Drainage Basins.
3. The remainder of the Northwest Territories might be administered by either Saskatchewan or Manitoba; or the remainder might be split along the current Mackenzie-Keewatin Districts boundary.
4. Alternatively it might be best to leave the remainder of the Territories to be administered from Ottawa until such time as pockets of population justify a change in administration.

We would suggest that if such union were desired and effected that special arrangements concerning representation in the provincial legislature should obtain. At the outset the residents of the present Mackenzie District might be heavily over-represented in the sense that each considerable centre of population might well be represented by a separate Member of the Legislative Assembly. (e.g.—at present Yellowknife, 3,245; Inuvik, 1,248; Hay River, 1,338; Fort Smith, 1,681;

VI LEGISLATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Fort Simpson 563), might each be represented by one member. The distances involved, the diverse range of interests to be expounded, and the recognized economic potential of northern areas, would justify and make acceptable to all such an arrangement.

It should be made clear that such an arrangement would be "temporary" in the sense that electoral disparities must cease as population increases in the area make possible conversion to any current population-per-representative proportions.

It may be emphasized also that union of the present Territories with present provinces need not be permanent. Several times between 1867 and 1912 the area now apportioned among the three prairie provinces and Ontario was reorganized and boundaries redrawn. The privilege of opting for permanent union or for division and separation should be provided at such time as the population and economic development of the present Territories reaches the point at which a viable provincial government can be sustained.

SPECTACULAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT of northern Canada is not necessarily immediately imminent or consequent on the presence or discovery of resources generally, or of mineral resources in particular. Economic development will take place only as Canadian and world industries need the products of the area, or alternatively as costs of exploitation and production of the resources in the area become competitive.

To the extent that economic development has been inhibited by the present form of government and by distant administration a change to intimate participation in government and local administration may be very beneficial. To the extent that economic realities are more significant than forms of government, citizens of the area should not expect marked economic changes to follow swiftly on political changes.

However as the resources and the economic factors affecting the Yukon Territory and the Mackenzie District are so closely associated with those of the neighbouring provinces, development of the area under the same local government may well be considered logical and desirable.

Achievement of participation in the full range of political activities is a very satisfying end in itself; withholding of the rights to full participation does breed frustrations which inhibit economic and social development.

There are now enough persons in the Yukon and the Districts of Mackenzie that they feel, collectively, the lack of representative and responsible government. There are not enough persons to support a full Government and administration.

As a stage in the self-governmental evolutionary process the Alberta Government suggests that union of these Territories with adjacent provinces be considered.

VII CONCLUSION

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